

Stele of Qingjing Mosque in Quanzhou “A study on the architectural history of the Mosque”

Dr. Hamada Hagra

Faculty of Archaeology – Fayoum University (Egypt)

hmh00@fayoum.edu.eg

Conclusion

Quanzhou is located on the Jinjiang River close to the sea, and it is a part of Fujian Province. The city has a long history and played an important role in Chinese trade between the fifth and eighth centuries AH (eleventh and fourteenth century AD). The city reached its position as one of the main Chinese ports for maritime trade in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279 AD); sometimes it surpassed its counterpart, Guangzhou, it remained a leading center of foreign trade until the late Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368AD). As was the case in the Chinese coastal cities such as Guangzhou, Yangzhou, and Hangzhou; the city also witnessed the movement of large-scale immigration from the Islamic world for economic, commercial, religious, and other purposes. With the arrival of Muslim merchants to the coast of South China, embassies, missions, and commercial convoys in major cities have appeared, and that trade returned with huge sums of money to Muslim merchants, which was sufficient to justify their permanent presence in the Chinese coastal cities. City of Quanzhou was one of the cities that Arab merchants visited, so they settled there and took a residence for them. The city was known to the Arabs as the City of Zaytun, which was mentioned in the records of travelers and historians such as Ibn Battuta, who visited it in 745 AH / 1345 AD, we quoting from his words “When we crossed the sea, the first city we reached was the City of Zaytun, and neither this city nor all the countries of China and the Indians had olives, but it is a name that was given to it”.

The Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) was a real starting point for a golden economic era in the city of Quanzhou, which continued for later centuries, and Muslims established their feet in the city in a way that they dominated trade, economy, and politics, which indicates their status with large number, wealth, and economic capabilities in it is that the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) relied on donations from foreign Muslims in Quanzhou in 607 AH / 1211 AD. It is noteworthy that Muslim communities in the city during the Song and Yuan Dynasties had lived a very prosperous period, historical texts preserved for us the names of many Muslim families that topped the political scene in Quanzhou City during the Yuan Dynasty such as the Ding (丁), Pu (蒲), and Su (苏). Pu Shougeng (蒲壽庚) was one of the richest merchants in Fujian Province when he was appointed around 1250 AD, overseeing the freight trade (customs office official) in Quanzhou, and had economic and political strength that had enabled him to occupy this position for about thirty years and that was between the years 648-679 AH / 1250-1280 AD, and his family continued to enjoy a prominent position and a privileged position under the rule of the Yuan Dynasty. The number of Muslim merchants increased in the city, especially during the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty, and trade during their reign reached unprecedented proportions.

What indicates the greatness of the Islamic presence in the city is that textual sources and archaeological discoveries indicate that the city contained many mosques - just like other

Chinese cities - during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD), and some even claim that the city had six mosques: Al-Ashab Mosque, the Qingjing Mosque, which was located at the southern gate of Quanzhou during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279 AD), and the Yemen Mosque, which was located in Jintoupu, outside the Tonghuai Gate, and dates back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD), and the Mosque of Muhammad, which was near the southern gate, dating back to the year 1322 AD, and a mosque that was located outside the eastern gate of the city, in addition to a mosque that might have been located in the Ming Shantang area.

The Qingjing Mosque is one of the study mosques, as the city had more than one, but they were affected by periods of strife, wars, and rebellions that affected them. The Chinese inscription dated 750 AH / 1350 CE is the only remnant of the Qingjing Mosque. Because the inscription is inside the Al-Ashab Mosque, and since the Al-Ashab Mosque has an Arabic foundation inscription dated 710 AH / 1310-1311 AD; Confusion occurred among many researchers, and some concluded that the Al-Ashab Mosque is in fact the Qingjing Mosque recorded in the Chinese inscription.

One of the explanations for this difference between the Arabic and Chinese inscriptions is that both inscriptions record different stages of rebuilding the mosque or reflect a different viewpoint in recording the historical stages of the mosque. Others have argued that both of them record the construction date of two different mosques, and that the original inscription of 1350 AD may have been damaged when the Qingjing Mosque was destroyed. Since the (current) Al-Ashab Mosque was the only mosque that remained standing in the city by the year 913 AH / 1507 AD, Muslims of the city transferred the memorial plaque of the Qingjing Mosque to the Al-Ashab Mosque. It is worth noting that the location of these discoveries is consistent with the location of the Qingjing Mosque mentioned in the Chinese inscription of the year 750 AH / 1350 CE, which provided evidence supporting this hypothesis. In the same context, we can confidently determine that the Qingjing Mosque - the subject of the study - is not the Al-Ashab Mosque for several reasons; It is reasonable to assume that after the destruction of the Qingjing Mosque and the transfer of his Chinese painting of the year 750 AH / 1350 CE to the Al-Ashab Mosque, which happened during the unrest that accompanied the fall of the Yuan Dynasty in the 1360s.

However, in the year 758 AH / 1365AD, Emperor Hongwu (1368-1398 AD) managed to take control of Nanjing and declared it the capital of China under the Ming Dynasty, the new dynasty as a substitute for the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty. Whatever the case, that period was a decisive turning point in the history of Chinese Muslims. As the new emperors quickly issued a set of decrees and laws that would accelerate the integration of Muslims into Chinese society, and the year 769 AH / 1368 CE witnessed the first decree by Emperor Hongwu (1368-1398 AD), according to which foreign languages, names and costumes were banned. Then Muslims in China began to gradually integrate into Chinese society, and Muslims lost their independent status, their old name (Fan) (guests or foreigners) faded, and they began to rely on Chinese culture, and Arabic and Persian languages were gradually abandoned, they adopted Chinese language as an alternative, and the emperor's move was an important step to forcibly assimilate Muslims.

By the tenth century AH (sixteenth century AD), the policy of Sinicization had paid off, whereas the Arabic foundational inscription of the Al-Ashab Mosque was written in Arabic, a language that no one could read in Quanzhou at that time, when there were no people who were able to

compare the Chinese inscription of the Qingjing Mosque with the Arabic inscription of the Al-Ashab Mosque; Chinese Muslims used Qingjing, the Chinese name of the Chinese stele, in place of the Al-Ashab, the Arabic name in the Arabic inscription. This is what gave Al-Ashab Mosque a new name, and became known as the Qingjing Mosque, therefore, all the inscriptions and historical texts of the ninth century AH (fifteenth century AD) including the name of the Qingjing Mosque directly refer to the Al-Ashab Mosque.

The Text of Wu Jian, 1350 AD

The Qingjing Mosque had a Chinese memorial plaque dated to the Yuan Dynasty, and when the inscription was damaged, Wu Jian (吴鉴), the government clerk, recorded the inscription in 750 AH / 1350 CE, into the Quanzhou history, known as Minshu (閩書), during the ninth year of the period known as Zhizheng (1341-1370 AD), which belongs to the reign of Emperor Tughun Timur (1333 - 1368 AD). The text consists of 454 Chinese characters, according to the traditional Chinese writing, and this text is of great importance. This is only because it is one of the earliest Chinese scriptures for Muslims in China.

“To the west of Yumen (玉門) [a city in China, it is located in Gansu Province], and at a distance of a thousand miles, there is a country called the country of Dashi (大寔) [Arabia], and it is bordered by both Anxi (安息) [Persia] and Tiaozi (條支) [Mesopotamia] in the north, which separates it from both the countries of Tufan (土番) [Tibetan Empire] and Gaochang (高昌) [located at the northern edge of the Taklamakan Desert in Turkestan], and Yunnan (雲南) [a province in southern China] and the kingdom of Annan (安南) [Vietnam] from the south, and the western sea. Its land is flat, with a vast area of tens of thousands of miles. It had no contact with China in ancient times. Its cities, palaces, gardens, moats, agriculture, and markets differ from Jianghui (江淮) [a geographical term referring to the area between the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River and the Huai River, which is the area between southern Henan and Jiangsu and central Anhui]. Its weather is hot and cold, its people are blossoming, and they grow vegetable grains, grapes, and fruits. The writings were recorded in three ways: the seal, the regular writing, and the triple pattern (beginning, middle, and end) First, Biēnbáěr (別諳拔爾) [a Chinese word meaning the Prophet or the bearer of the message] Muhammad (謨罕騫德) was king over the country of Medina Mòdénà (默德那) [Medina], he was born to be sacred, and he possessed great virtues, and the countries of the western regions were condemned to him, and the saints [the Companions] were sent to them. The name Pianbar in Chinese refers to angels, and it was revealed to him from heaven Fasting was written in one month of every year, and purity and ablution were required. Habitat [Qibla] is always available, just turn our faces to the west, and pray to Heaven [God], so that we purify ourselves and purify our secrets. The Heavenly Book [the Qur'an] is divided into thirty parts, and it contains one hundred and fourteen surah, divided into six thousand six hundred and sixty-six verses, and they call for profound integrity, public morals, selflessness ... The distinction between good and evil, after more than eight hundred years, is still able to attract new followers and many successive generations. In the first year of the Shaoxing period (紹興) [corresponding to the year 525 AH / 1131 CE]; Naguib Muzhir al-Din (Nàzhībo Mùzīxīlǔdīng, 納只卜穆茲喜魯丁), who sailed from Sanawei (Sānàwēi, 撒那威) [Siraf] in a merchant ship to Quanzhou, this mosque was built

in the southern part of the city, to facilitate prayers and worship. He set up silver lamps and incense burners to worship God, and he bought buildings and agricultural lands and placed them for the benefit of the common people of Muslims. After a period of time, the mosque became deserted due to the failure of Ahmed (Āhégwèi, 阿合味), who was in charge of the mosque, Méitāwánlǐ, 沒塔完裡) to perform his duties. When the mosque was subjected to an economic crisis, during the ninth year of the period of Zhi Zheng (至正) [corresponding to the year 1350 CE], the Sheikh Burhanuddin (Xia Bùlühǎndīng, 夏不魯罕丁) Sheikh of Islam (Shèsīlián, 攝思廉) asked Sharaf al-Din Khatib (Shèláfūdīng hābolīng, 舍刺甫丁哈卜) to led the Muslim commoners in submitting the invitation to Darughachi (Dálūhuāchì, 達魯花赤) [government administrative official]. Immediately, Gaochang Xieyu (高昌偈) made an inspection tour of the mosque, expressing his desire to recover the lost property of the mosque, which was returned to the people with pleasure. Jin Ali (金阿裡), a Lirén (里人) [a word meaning a person from the same town; Responsible name]. He also funded the architectural reform at his own expense and rebuilt the building, they used large slabs of stone for construction and the result was more than impressive. In order to immortalize his works, they were recorded.”

The memorial stele of Qingjing Mosque, 1507 AD

This inscription was erected in the Al-Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou in the year 913 AH / 1507AD, corresponding to the second year of the reign of Emperor Zhengde (1505-1521 AD), and the inscription was sealed with the Chinese standard calendar that depends on the date by day, month and year, and it came as follows “Auspicious day from the summer of the year known as Dingmao (丁卯) from the era of Emperor Zhengde [corresponding to the year 1507 AD]”. This inscription included Wu Jian's text dated 750 AH / 1350 CE as part of her inscriptions. It is noteworthy that the writing of the painting is in poor condition, hence we have mainly relied on what Yi Zhenggui (余振贵) and Lei Xiaojing (雷晓静) had done in their study titled (中国回族金石录) "Chinese Hui Stone Engravings", which was published in Ningxia in 2001 AD. The stele is located inside the eastern tower of the entrance block to the Al-Ashab Mosque, and we reach it via the passage from the main entrance and then turn right. The stele is cut from pink granite. It is a vertically standing rectangular plate, which is 2.60 m high and 1.10 m wide. The head of the inscription is engraved with six Chinese characters, which reads '立 清淨寺 碑記', literally means 'Memorial stele for the Reconstruction of Qingjing Mosque'. The body of the inscription is engraved with 22 vertical Chinese lines, with 60 letters each. Both the text of Wu Jian dated 1350 AD and the stele of al-Ashab Mosque in Quanzhou dated 1507 AD, they dealt with the history of the initial architecture of the Qingjing mosque; we quote from which recorded that “In the first year of the Shaoxing period [525 AH / 1131 AD]; Najib Muzhir al-Din (納只卜穆茲喜魯丁), who sailed from Sanawei (撒那威) [Siraf] in a merchant ship to Quanzhou, and he built this mosque in the southern side of the city, to facilitate prayers and worships; he set up silver lamps and incense burners, and bought buildings and lands and set them as waqf [endowment] for the benefit of the common people. Both of text and stele recorded the name of Najib Muzhir al-Din, the builder of the mosque, but they nevertheless did not provide us with sufficient information about him; Therefore, this

study seeks to trace his biography in the historical texts of the Song Dynasty, as its sources contained texts that recorded a lot about Arab and Muslim merchants, including both of a text written by Lin Zhiqi (林之奇) (1112-1176 AD), the official and government customs inspector in the port Quanzhou during the Southern Song Dynasty, and a text of Zhao Ruguo (1170-1231 AD), director of Commerce in Quanzhou. The two texts provide us more details about the merchant; he was an Arabian from Siraf (a port in Arabian Gulf), he was generous with his wealth, typical of the Western countries. He built a cemetery outside the southeast corner of the city walls to bury the bodies of the dying Western merchants [in Quanzhou].

According to the text of Wujian and Mosque stele; the second architecture was reformed in 750 AH / 1350 AD. Sheikh Burhanuddin () and Sharafuddin Khatib (), the two Muslim leaders of Quanzhou, led the Muslim community in the city to collect donations and funds needed to rebuild the Qingjing mosque. The stele recorded that Sheikh Burhanuddin reached the age of one hundred and twenty years. Also recorded that he submits the invitation to Darughachi [government administrative official], Gaochang Xieyu made an inspection tour of the mosque, expressing his wish to recover the lost property of the mosque. The stele and text also provided that Jin Ali financed the architectural reform of the mosque at his own expense.

Jin Ali's lineage goes back to the Muslim leader Pu Shougeng (蒲寿庚) who took over the administration of the city of Guangzhou between 1250 - 1280 AD. As for his father Jin Ji (金吉), he was sent by the court of the Yuan Dynasty to Quanzhou in 1333 AD, and as soon as he arrived there, He and his son Jin Ali became prominent figures of the city's thriving Islamic community. Later, during the Ispah rebellion (亦思巴奚兵亂), which was led by two Muslims from the city between 1357 and 1366 AD, and its base was the city of Quanzhou; Jin Ali appeared as a prominent leader in the court of the Yuan Dynasty, where the Emperor of Toghon Timur (1333 - 1368 AD) was assigned the task of eliminating the rebellion and placing him at the head of an army, and he succeeded in his mission in 1366 AD, and he had an important role in ending this decade-long civil war Time. Chinese historical texts also provided us with valuable information regarding a Muslim leader in Quanzhou assisting Jin Ali in the architectural reform of the mosque, namely Pu Hiri, the second son of Pu Shougeng.

The study showed that the members of the Muslim community in Quanzhou during the Song and Yuan dynasties were the sponsors of the repair, construction and restoration of mosques in China, and the matter was not limited to one group without the others; As different groups of the Muslim community appeared in Quanzhou, such as the merchants. A new group emerged, which is the government officials and Muslim leaders. The merchants and Muslim clerics from the Arabs and Persians were an important economic class, whose role and contributions were not only limited to the economy, but they were also patrons of Islamic architecture in China, and so on, they possessed huge capital that enabled them without others from the general Muslim community to do such actions, they represented a higher social class in the Chinese social hierarchy immediately after the rulers between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries AD, and with the passage of time and the arrival of many of their descendants to positions and major jobs in the army and the court, they undoubtedly became new shepherds, and they took upon themselves to search for the history of their ancestors and the history of Islam to China, and they did not neglect the mosques, for they were support for their communities, and they did not abandon them with the money and wealth they had.

We infer from the inscription that the Islamic waqf system in China was known and effective at a relatively early period; The seraphic merchant, Najib Muzhir al-Din, had bought property from buildings and lands and endowed it for the Mosque, which is one of the earliest examples - if not the first - of the Islamic endowment systems in China. Ibn Battuta (d. 1377) tells about Muslims in the city of Khansa-Hangzhou, in which he reported that "There are great numbers of Muslims... They have a Zāwiya [institution] known as al- Uthmaniah that has a good architecture, many waqf, and a number of Sufis. Othman built the mosque in this city. He makes for each of the mosque and Zawiya many waqfs". We believed that this text of Ibn Battuta was the first reference to endowment in Chinese Islamic architecture, and therefore the inscription of the Qingjing Mosque is an important historical document that has clearly monitored and confirmed the existence of the endowment system on mosques in China during the Song Dynasty. The inscription also provided us with important historical data and information on mosque systems and functions during the Yuan Dynasty. The job title of Méitǎwánlǐ (沒塔完裡), one of the mosques' jobs, appeared, which means the person responsible for protecting and caring for the mosque.

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